

6 Ways Hammertoes Affect Balance as You Age

1. How Hammertoes Change the Way Your Foot Works

A hammertoe develops when the middle joint of a toe bends and stays bent, making it harder to lie flat or press firmly against the ground. Toes help grip, push off, and make small balance adjustments; a stiff toe can't support that work properly.



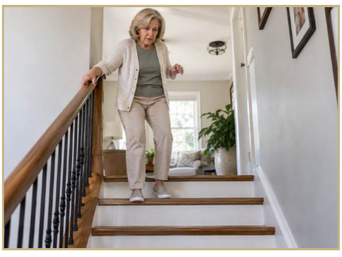


2. Why Balance Falters as Toes Stiffen

Toes send the brain constant feedback about the ground. When a toe stiffens into a hammertoe, those signals become less reliable, making uneven ground, quick direction changes, and long periods of standing all feel progressively less stable over time.

3. Falls in Older Adults Are a Real Risk

As hammertoes worsen, they shift how weight moves across the foot. Combined with age-related muscle loss and slower reaction times, the risk of falling on stairs, curbs, or uneven ground increases, particularly when other foot changes are also present.





4. Signs Your Hammertoe May Be Affecting Your Balance

Tripping more often on curbs or thresholds, avoiding uneven surfaces, reaching for railings more than usual, and uneven shoe wear are all signs that a hammertoe may be affecting your footing. Bring any of these observations to your next podiatrist appointment.

5. Treating Hammertoes Without Surgery

If caught while the joint is still flexible, non-surgical treatment is an option, wide toe box shoes, cushioned pads, toe splints, and daily stretches keep the joint mobile and slow progression before it becomes rigid and surgery becomes the better solution.





6. Protect Your Balance and Mobility

A hammertoe doesn't have to lead to years of unsteady walking. Noticing changes early, such as less comfortable shoes, toes not moving normally, and feeling less steady, makes treatment easier and keeps more options available before the condition progresses further.

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